

Recession Proof your Organization through the use of Employee Surveys

By Elaine Strothers

The quality of an organization can be largely determined by the quality of the people it employees (Robbins, 2001). Success for most organizations depends on finding the best people to perform the tasks that ultimately lead to strategic goals that the company has developed. Human resource management decisions and methods are critical to ensuring that the organization hires and keeps the right personnel (Robbins, 2001).

Finding the right people and developing specific methods that focus on the needs of employees are steps organizations are making to ensure their longevity and success. Yet, organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain profit margins, yet alone the happiness of their employees during an economic recession. This is one of the biggest challenges that we face today with today's uncertain times.

While many organizations are cutting departments and trimming expenses it should be noted that one expense that should stand the test of economic transition is the cost of implementing employee surveys. Surveys dedicated to the welfare of employees and the business are required for sustained organizational growth, while being cost effective. Specifically, an organization can recession proof their business strategy through the use of employee surveys.

How, you may ask, can employee survey recession proof an organization?

1. Employee surveys save organizations money through decreased compensation.

The goal of employee surveys is to obtain honest feedback that can be translated into identifiable action steps to prolong the workforce and success of the organization. If questions are posed about job satisfaction, then actions steps can be taken to increase job satisfaction of the workforce. Employees are happy and are willing to stay. Toby Velt, Former CEO of FireSummit, Inc realized that compensation wasn't the sole deferment as to why his employees stayed. Velt paid his workers 15% less than his competitors but it was the actions steps he took to secure happiness in the office. He provided game rooms, free soda and sessions devoted to network gaming (NBRI, Why conduct employee surveys?).

2. Employee surveys save organizations money through decreased turnover.

It is no surprise that turnover eats away at organizations profits. If employees are happy and stay loyal to an organization, turnover cost are dramatically reduces. Turnover estimates 150% of an employee's yearly salary (NBRI, Why conduct employee surveys?). If people are unhappy at work it would be no surprise that they are looking for another employer during your organizations production time.

3. Employee surveys create feelings of value.

At times of economic downturn one of the first items on an organizations to do list is lay offs. This gives the workforce the idea that they are expendable (Stringer, 7 common misconceptions employees have about their employees). Once an employee feels this way, production decreases and creativity decreases. This affects not only other co-workers but this non-productive behavior translates into decreased customer service and decreased production which leads to decreased profits to the bottom line.

4. Employee surveys can ward off potential law suits

An abusive work environment is not a productive one. Administering an employee survey can provide information about problems with a supervisor or other co-workers. Identifying these problems early and internally can result in legal cost savings. It is no surprise that law suits during an economic recession would be terrible for an organization to endure financially (NBRI, Surveys may head off potential suits if the boss is bad, survey the situation).

5. Employee surveys can fight employee burnout

Surveying employees are a necessary step to identify problems, gaps in intended processes, and opportunities for business improvements. However, it can also provide information as to how exhausted, your employees actually are. Burned out employees can result in increased vacation time, increase use of sick time, personal time and just plain increased absentee rates—all of which effects productivity in an already stagnate business economy (Detwiler, 2008). Organizations can

increase retention and decrease burnout by implementing an employee survey. Asking employees directly what is causing burnout, can help organizations take action steps as to ward off this problem.

Resources and staffing are the building blocks to success of any corporation, big or small. The ability to staff a company with the most competent and qualified employees is one that comes through time, experience, and trial and error. Once a company is solidified with a plethora of quality working employees, and an efficient human resources/hiring staff, the only thing left to worry about is maintaining employee satisfaction, and increasing productivity. Yet, the ability to staff and maintain a happy and productive work environment is crucial in already recession laden economy. Implementing an employee survey is a sure fire way to recession proof your organization.

References

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